



# NEWS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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## **United States Submits Proposals to Provide International Trade Protections for Eight Species at 2004 CITES Conference in Thailand**

The United States has submitted proposals to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to implement international trade protections for eight species of plants and wildlife at its biannual meeting in Thailand later this year. The species include painted bunting, humphead wrasse, Asian yew and five species of Asian turtles.

The proposals, announced by Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson, also seek to remove international trade restrictions that currently apply to the bobcat and the peach-faced lovebird and to change the status of the American bald eagle to reflect its ongoing recovery in the continental United States.

CITES is an international agreement signed by 166 nations that is designed to control and regulate global trade in certain wild animals and plants that are or may become threatened with extinction due to commercial trade. The convention's 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties will be held in October in Bangkok.

"As one of the world's largest consumers for wildlife and wildlife products, the United States has an important role to play in guarding against the over-exploitation of wildlife species and ensuring that any such trade in these species is legal and sustainable," Manson said. "Our proposals reflect the evolving nature of the international wildlife trade that requires CITES nations to continually refine, update, and adapt the way the convention is implemented and enforced."

A CITES-regulated species may be included in one of three appendices to the Convention:

- Appendix I includes species for which it is determined that any commercial trade is detrimental to the survival of the species. Therefore, no commercial trade is allowed in Appendix-I species. Non-commercial trade in such species is allowed if it does not jeopardize the species' survival in the wild. Permits are required for the exportation and importation of Appendix-I species.
- Appendix II includes species for which it has been determined that commercial trade may be detrimental to the survival of the species if that trade is not strictly controlled. Trade in these species is regulated through the use of export permits.
- Appendix III includes species listed by a range country that requires the assistance of other parties to ensure that exports of their native species are legal.

Permits are used to control and monitor trade in native species. Any CITES party may place a native species in Appendix III.

Any listing of a species in either Appendix I or II requires approval by two-thirds of the CITES party countries that vote on the proposal.

For the October meeting, the United States is proposing several plants and animals for inclusion in CITES Appendices II as well as removal from Appendix II or transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II.

The United States is proposing the following species for inclusion in Appendix II:

- **Asian turtles** -- The United States is sponsoring proposals to add five species of Asian turtles to CITES Appendix II. This is a continuation of efforts to include all species of Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises in the CITES Appendices, as agreed at a CITES-sponsored Technical Workshop on Conservation of and Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia, held in Kunming, China in March 2002. The United States co-sponsored similar proposals at the last two conferences of parties.
- **Asian yews** -- The United States will co-sponsor with China adding additional species of this tree to Appendix II. The extract from this tree is used for medicinal purposes and the United States is seeking to have additional species regulated under CITES, in line with consensus recommendations of the CITES Plants Committee.
- **Humphead wrasse**— Based on recent research on the effects of trade on the sustainability of this fish species, the United States is proposing adding the species to Appendix II.
- **Bald eagle** — America's national symbol, the bald eagle is making a comeback in the United States. Therefore, this country is proposing to transfer the bald eagle from Appendix I to Appendix II which brings the CITES listing into line with the eagle's current biological status. This will ensure that CITES actions are consistent with actions under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.
- **Painted bunting** — Trade is adversely impacting this native North American songbird and wild populations are declining. Therefore, the United States is proposing this species for Appendix II.

The United States is proposing to remove the following species from Appendix II:

- **Bobcat**—The United States, with strong support from state wildlife agencies, is proposing to remove the bobcat from Appendix II because the species is abundant and well-managed and therefore does not require CITES listing. The significant resources invested by states, tribes, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with CITES requirements for export of bobcat could be redirected to other species with more immediate conservation needs.

- **Peach-faced lovebirds**—The United States is proposing to remove this small parrot from Appendix II because nearly all of these birds in trade are captive-bred and therefore trade has little or no impact on wild populations.

The second portion of the United States' submission deals with resolutions that focus on the interpretation of the treaty. Not only do such resolutions help member nations better carry out the Convention, but also they provide a forum for the biennial evaluation of critical wildlife trade issues. The United States is submitting documents on the following six issues:

- **Introduction from the Sea (IFS)**-- This is a discussion paper and draft resolution on some of the important aspects of CITES Introduction from the Sea implementation, including permit issuance policy and interpretation of terms associated with IFS.
- **Bigleaf mahogany plywood**-- Following extensive consultation with the CITES Plants Committee, the Mahogany Working Group, and U.S. industry, the United States is submitting a definition for bigleaf mahogany plywood corresponding with Customs' *Harmonized Tariff Codes* in order to aid in CITES implementation and enforcement.
- **Production Systems**-- This submission contains two separate draft resolutions. The first concerns a clarification of ranching to correct an inadvertent omission that has lead to an inappropriate use of this source code, causing conservation concern and enforcement problems. The second draft resolution concerns the creation of a joint Animals and Plant Committee working group to clarify the treatment of production systems under CITES.
- **Regulation of trade in plants**-- The United States, as the chair of a CITES Plants Committee Working Group, is recommending changes to clarify the definition of "artificially propagated" as well as the exemption from CITES controls of flaked seedlings of orchid species.
- **Timber Identifier**-- To aid inspectors at ports of entry, the United States is proposing the inclusion of a timber identifier number on CITES permits and certificates. If adopted, the U.S. hopes the measure will address some enforcement issues at U.S. ports.

For more information on the U.S. and CITES, please visit:  
<http://international.fws.gov>.

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